THE

Weekly Comedy:

OR, THE

Humours of the AGE:

As Daily Acted in

Town and Country.

To be Continued every Friday.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

Levy, *a Recruiting Officer.*
Hazard, *a Gameſter.*
Bite, *a Sharper.*
Prim, *a Beau.*
Blunt, *a Plain Dealer.*
Whim, *a Projector.*

Venture, *a Merchant.*
Talley, *a Stock-Jobber.*
Querpo, *a Quack.*
Trick, *a Lawyer.*
Grim, *an Aſtrologer.*
Froth, *a Punſter.*

Double, *a Time-ſerver.*
Bays, *a Poet.*
Log, *a Mariner.*
Harlem, *a News-writer.*
Guzzle, *a Hard Drinker.*
Bohee, *the Coffee-man.*

Note, That we ſhall change our Scene from Place to Place, and vary our Characters as Occaſion ſhall require.

Friday December the 5th, 1707.

SCENE *a* Tavern *continu'd.* Bays, Double, Venture, *and* Harlem *at a Table.*

Bays. WELL, Gentlemen, ſince I have ventured to throw ſome of my Poetical Excrements under your Noſes, pray be ſo kind as to tell me how they ſavour with you?

Double. They ſmell a little too rank of *High-Church*, for my Noſtrils. I am for *Moderation* in all things; but that's a Vertue you Poets have ſeldom any regard to.

Venture. I confeſs that Deform'd Off-Spring that you ſeem to be ſo Fond of, was firſt Calved into the World by your Party. But no ſooner was the *Illegitimate Iſſue* Born and Chriſten'd,

but the Adulterous Parents having an averſion to the Brat, drop'd it at the *Church Door*, that thoſe might Maintain it at their Coſt and Sorrow, whom you thought would Foſter the *Baſtard* for its Name's ſake, ſo that as ſoon as ever you found it was taken up and Fondl'd, tho' you own'd your ſelves the Parents, yet you never afterwards contributed any thing to the ſupport of your hopeful Progeny.

Double. Fie; fie; Mr. *Venture*, did we not give it a good Name, call it *Virtue*, Preach it up in our Meetings, ſtrenuouſly Maintain it in all our Weekly Pamphlets.

Venture. Yes, yes: Whilſt you were under the *Laſh* of a Set of *Honeſt Patriots*, who did not like your Proceedings and when your *Scribbling Inſinuators*, who were to Poyſon the People for your Purpoſe, were dayly in Danger of the Old *Proteſtant Ruff*; then nothing but *Moderation* was the earneſt cry of the *Saints*, becauſe they knew too well their own Practices moſt juſtly deſerv'd the Reſentments of Authority; but as ſoon as they had procur'd ſuch a change of Affairs, as to make themſelves ſafe in the Holy work of *Reformation*, then every thing was out of Danger on their ſide, and *Moderation* had turn'd it ſelf into a *Voracious Serpent*, that began immediately to Prey upon the very Vitals of thoſe who, thro' miſtaken Ignorance, had ſo kindly Nouriſh'd the Deceitful Worm in their warm Boſoms: But Heaven be Praiſed, the Impoſtor is Detected, and the whole Falacy by this time pretty well exploded.

Bays. But what's all this, Gentlemen, to the Queſtion I aſk'd you? This is not telling me how you like my Verſes.

Venture. As to my part I very well approve of 'em, conſidering they are only the indigeſted Froth of an Exuberant Fancy, Elevated by nothing but a little dull *Coffee*, meer Poyſon for a Poet.

Harlem. Without any Flattery to you, Mr. *Bays*, I think they are very applicable to the purpoſe; I have known the time when a Poet might have got a Guinea or two by Preſenting ſuch a Copy to a Generous Alderman of the right Stamp.

Double. Should any Body give it now, I ſhould think *a Fool and their Money was ſoon parted.*

Bays. Why ſo, Mr. *Double*, I remember you were once ſo Generous, as to preſent me with a Guinea for a Copy of Verſes upon the Birth of the Young Gentleman; but I believe you have ſuffer'd that to ſlide out of your Memory.

Double. I knew we ſhould be plagu'd with nothing but your *Jingles*, or a Talk of 'em, as ſoon as you came into our Company; I would as ſoon chuſe a *Green-Bird* for a Companion, who is always ringing *Whittington* upon his Bells, as I would a *Poet*, who is always Jabbering about his Verſes.

Bays. Why ſo Angry, Mr. *Tackabout*, your Weathercock Converſation is very much to be valu'd, indeed, wind you up but with 'tother Quart, and with a Silver Weight a Man may make you run round like the *Flyar* of a *Jack*, to all the Points of the Compaſs, either in *Religion*, or *Politicks*.

Venture. I think Mr. *Bays* has been pretty even with you now, Mr. *Double*.

Harlem. You muſt have a care, Mr. *Double*, how you give ſuch Provocations to Men of *Wit*, you had as good take a *Bear* by the *Tooth*, as to meddle with a *Poet*, or an *Author*.

Double. I think you *Poets* and *Authors*, as you call your ſelves, are fitteſt Company for *Bookſellers* and *Printers*, that

that know which way to get *Money* by you, as for my part I never got Three-pence by you in my Life; ſo there's my Club to the Wine, and farwel Mr. *Poet*, and Mr. *Author*.

Exit Double.

Bays. Have a care you don't ſtumble as you go Home upon ſome *New Opinion*, and knock your *Conſcience* out of Joint; for ſuch an *Inſtable Mind* is very ſubject to be diſlocated.

Venture. Let him go, a good Riddance. —— But methinks, Mr. *Bays*, you talk now more like a *Surgeon* than a *Poet*: In my Opinion, Diſjointing of *Conſciences*, or Diſlocating of *Minds*, are ſtretching your Terms beyond the Licenſe of a *Poet*.

Bays. Not at all, Sir; we may talk like *Apothecaries*, if we pleaſe, and can juſtifie it when we have done; for you never knew a *Poet*, or a *Lawyer*, tho' in a Wrong Cauſe without a *Precedent*.

Venture. But, I hope, Errors are not to be juſtify'd by Examples.

Bays. How elſe do you think ſo many Great Men in all the *Sciences* would excuſe their Blunders; have not every *Faction* in the *Church* their *Martyrs* and *Authorities* to back their *Falſe Opinions*; every *Crafty Orator* at the *Bar* the muſty Reports of Defunct *Judges*, to use as Crutches to a Lame Cauſe; every Young *Phyſician* the old Receipts of ſome dead Worm-eaten *Virtuoſo*, to juſtifie his Practice, tho' he has kill'd the Patient. Why, therefore, ſhould not the Nods of *Homer*, the Slips of *Horace*, and the Levity of *Marſhal*, be ſufficient *Precedents* for us *Modern Poets* to take the like Liberty.

Venture. Then you think it allowable, as well as common, for Men of *Wit* and *Learning*, to make one Error paſs Muſter by the Force and Prevalence of another.

Bays. If it was not for that Advantage, the Illiterate Part of the World would appear leſs Guilty than the Learned; but when ever theſe Two Contend, the former muſt bear the Blame, becauſe the latter are two Cunning for 'em; the Wiſer Part will ride, the others muſt be ridden; Wiſe Men can ſkreen their Errors, Fools muſt be Puniſh'd for 'em.

Venture. If Human Affairs are Canvas'd after this manner, we have a fine Equitable World of it.

Bays. 'Tis certainly ſo as I tell you; we *Poets*, you muſt know, are very poſſitive Fellows. —— But now to make it more evident, *viz.* If a Great Man has Wrong'd you and you call him *Knave*, tho' you are able to prove it, you ſhall be Puniſh'd for a *Saucebox*, becauſe he can juſtifie his Oppreſſions by his Riches and his Grandure, and you are but hauling a *Lyon* to the Stake, who will tear you to pieces, if you attempt to bring him within the Juſtice of the *Laws*; but if a *Rogue* ſhall Wrong you, who is ſo far Beneath you, that he is unable to Contend, then, if you have as little Compaſſion upon him that's under you, as you will commonly find from thoſe above you, *Lord have Mercy upon the poor Wretch that has given you the advantage of him.*

Harlem. Then I find a Man in the Middle Station is in the Condition of a Famous Fellow, call'd *Bully Dawſon*, who being upbraided by a Gentleman for ſuffering himſelf to be Kick'd by all the World, reply'd, *You are much miſtaken, Sir, I am only Kick'd by one half of the World, and the other half I Kick.*

Venture. A very applicable Story.---- But pray, Mr. *Bays*, how came you to vary

vary from Learned to Great Men; I believe there are many Learned Men that are not Great, and many Great or Rich Men that are not Learned.

Bays. You are all Wrong, Sir, for a Poor *Scholar*, be he never ſo well Learn'd, will never have the *Honour* to be thought ſo till he is once Climb'd into *Good Preferment*; and the readieſt way to obtain it, is to *Flatter* a *Wealthy Blockhead*, who is able to give it him, till the World rings of his Praiſes, and then, perhaps, for fear his *Vertue-maker* ſhould rob him of the fine Feathers he has ſtuck in the *Fools-Cap*, he Provides well for him, ſo then he may have *Hangers-on* and *Scycophants* to Trumpet about his own *Excellency*, as he did his Benefactors.

Venture. But ſtill you muſt allow, That Great Men are not always Learn'd.

Bays. You are ſtill miſtaken; if he be a Great Man, and has but *Wit* enough to be *Generous*, he may be as *Learned*, as *Juſt*, as *Brave* and as *Vertuous*, as himſelf deſires to be.

Harlem. In the Name of the *Stars* how can that be? If he is not really poſſeſt of thoſe extraordinary Gifts; how can his *Generoſity* furniſh him?

Venture. 'Tis a Riddle to me. Pray, Mr. *Bays*, explain it.

Bays. How do you think we *Poets* Live, but by ſupplying the Deficiencies of Great Men?

Harlem. Pray how can you ſupply them with what your ſelves oft want? Beſides, *Vertue* and *Learning* are no ways Transferrable, but by *Good Inſtructions*.

Bays. Poh, poh, you Talk ſtrangely, we *Poets* can make a *Whore Honeſt*; a *Dowdy Fair*; a *Coward Brave*; an *Atheiſt Pious*; a *Knave Juſt*; a *Libertine Vertuous*; a *Dunce Learned*; and a *Blockhead Witty*: Nay, if he Cheats the Kingdom of never ſo much *Money*, we can perſwade the People to believe him as *Good* a *Patriot* as ever was Truſted with *Authority*.

Venture. But pray, Mr. *Bays*, what Method do you take to perform theſe Wonders?

Bays. Only bolſter up their *Reputation* with a few *Flatt'ring Dedications*; that's all.

Venture. Will ſuch *Groſs Adulations* hide ſuch *Monſtrous Infirmities*, as you have mentioned, from the *Eyes* of the Publick.

Bays. Moſt Effectually. Mr. *Harlem* knows 'tis the Weakneſs of the Common People to believe any thing that's in Print.

Venture. Then ſure you *Poets* muſt be highly in Eſteem amongſt the *Quality*, ſince the Ladies are beholding to you for their *Beauty*, and the Gentlemen for their *Bravery*.

Bays. For your further Satisfaction I'll give you this Diſtich.

Verſe muſt Immortalize the Hero's *Name*,
The King *gives Honour*, *but the* Poet *Fame*.

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